

fires that have been plaguing southern California this past week and even now continue to rage. I would also like to recognize the emergency assistance that has been mobilized to help the counties of Ventura, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Bernardino. The scope of the devastation this disaster has delivered is vast. It has viciously taken at least 14 lives, destroyed over 1,500 homes, and burned over 500,000 acres of land. In addition, over 50,000 people have been evacuated from their homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the men and women from my district who, where capable, have dedicated their time to helping combat the fires in southern California. Calaveras County has donated 5 fire engines along with 15 fire fighters. Amador County has donated an entire team consisting of 2 engines and nine people, including one fire chief. In addition, Solano and Sacramento Counties have each dedicated significant resources to assist in the firefighting effort, including over three fire strike teams and two trucks. These mobilizations are fighting to alleviate the impact of this disaster even as I speak. It is my sincere hope that these brave men and women will be able to safely and swiftly contain these fires. My thoughts and prayers are with them.

#### TAIWAN NATIONAL DAY

#### HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 29, 2003*

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor and congratulate the people of the Taiwan on their Double Ten: National Day. Earlier this month, on October 10, 2003, Taiwan celebrated its National Day. This special day for Taiwan is celebrated to commemorate the 1911 Wuch'ang uprising, which marked the beginning of a struggle towards political democracy.

On October 10, fireworks lighted the skies of Taiwan, and the streets were filled with large parades. This celebration is much like our 4th of July celebrations. Taiwan is a shining example of economic success and democratization. Taiwan's accomplishments are numerous, and its success is attributed to its people.

In August of this year I had the pleasure of meeting Taiwan's Vice President, Madame Annette Lu in Los Angeles. Vice President Lu is the first female vice president to serve Taiwan. She has devoted her time and efforts to promoting human rights, democracy, and technology. She has made countless contributions to the advancement of women in Taiwan. With her efforts and many other women like her, the women of Taiwan have progressed in education, business, politics, and society in general. Vice President Lu is a true dynamic democratic leader. She represents her people and her country well.

Once again, my best wishes and congratulations to the people of Taiwan on their Double Ten National Day.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF PHELPS HOSPICE

#### HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 29, 2003*

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Phelps Hospice and to congratulate it on its 20th anniversary. Since 1983, Phelps Hospice has provided end of life care and comfort throughout Westchester County, NY, helping to relieve the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain of more than 2,000 patients and their loved ones.

An essential element of this care is the personalized service that Phelps Hospice provides to meet the unique needs of each patient and his or her loved ones. Working with the patient's primary care physician, Phelps Hospice develops a plan of care that matches the family's needs with the abilities of its medical director, nurses, social workers, home health aids, spiritual counselors, psychologists, nutritionists, volunteers, therapists, and bereavement counselors.

Through support groups and memorial services, Phelps Hospice has offered bereavement counseling for the families of hospice patients, as well as for members of the community.

In addition, since 2002, Phelps Hospice has provided complementary care consisting of massage, music, pet and art therapy, making it one of the first hospices in Westchester County to incorporate complementary care into its list of services.

To aid in the care of patients, Phelps Hospice has trained hundreds of selfless volunteers in the past 20 years.

And, of course, the numerous services offered by Phelps Hospice are provided to all patients regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual preference, or ability to pay.

I am honored to have this opportunity to congratulate Phelps Hospice on its 20th anniversary. Westchester County is undoubtedly a better place thanks to the tireless work of its staff and volunteers. I wish them the best of luck in the next 20 years—and more—of service to our community.

#### HONORING MARGARET "WEENIE" ROGERS GHIOTTO, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA'S "GREAT BROOKSVILLIAN"

#### HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 29, 2003*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a woman who has for many years been an outstanding businesswoman and citizen in my hometown of Brooksville, Florida. Margaret Rogers Ghiotto, known as "Weenie" to her close friends and family, was recently honored as a "Great Brooksvillian" for her work on behalf of the community.

Aside from owning and managing Rogers' Christmas House Village and the Jennings House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, Mrs. Ghiotto has a background in education, having taught children

about the environment and the value of trees for many years.

At a ceremony in city hall this week as part of Brooksville's Founders' Week Celebration, Mrs. Ghiotto was honored with a plaque, reception, and many kind words. This weekend she will be the Grand Marshal of the Brooksville Founder's Day Parade.

While this most recent honor is certainly a laudable one, it is not the first such accolade Mrs. Ghiotto has received. Over the years, she has been named the Hernando County Chamber of Commerce's "Citizen of the Year," AWBA's "Business Associate of the Year," and the Lions Club's "Outstanding Citizen." She even has awards named after her—the University of Florida Lambda Chi Alpha chapter gives an annual leadership award to a distinguished member, called "The Margaret Rogers Ghiotto Award" and the city of Brooksville honors businesses and individuals with the "Margaret Rogers Ghiotto Beautification Award."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues in this body join me in honoring this great woman and great citizen. We should all be so lucky as to have a Margaret Rogers Ghiotto in each of our districts.

#### HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF HANK MASON

#### HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 29, 2003*

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Hank Mason of Los Lunas, New Mexico for his distinguished service to our country during the Vietnam War. Mr. Mason is a great American, and recognition for his service to our country is long overdue. I thank him for his commitment to freedom and the sacrifices he endured while serving in Vietnam.

Mason earned, but never received, several war and service medals from the United States Army for his 3 years of service, including a tour in Vietnam. Mason says he has made many attempts for more than 3 decades to receive the medals that were due to him, with no avail. On Saturday, October 25, 2003, I was proud to present Mr. Mason with the military service medals he has been waiting for more than 34 years.

We must always recognize the men and women of our Armed Forces who have valiantly defended our American values throughout our Nation's history. These remarkable individuals have helped to make America secure and have advanced the cause of freedom worldwide. By answering the call of duty, our veterans have risked their lives to protect their fellow countrymen. Individuals like Hank Mason have inspired our Nation with their courage, patriotism and dedication.

#### INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3387

#### HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 29, 2003*

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 3387, the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2003. Mr. Speaker,